

IN WONDERLAND

Lieut. Lloyd H. Greenwood,  
USAAF

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## IN WONDERLAND

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by Lieut. Lloyd H. Greenwood

USAAF

her sitting-room, she tossed her hair and turned to him eagerly. one rang. dropped from her shoulders. His ring was wildly. They waited nerv-

etter answer," he said, and his d strange.

her head angrily. "Let it ring." It damp, his nerves crawled. The aled again and again.

like a long-distance call," he said way it keeps ringing?"

to the telephone. "Hello," she voice sounded far off and sleepy. is is Charles."

what in the world's the matter—s ungodly hour? You awakened

... Eden, is Sam there?" not! You gave all the servants

must get in touch with Walt edately. I've been ringing his r an hour without an answer. He ere—even on New Year's, Walt y out all night. I must talk to ately."

call me?"

I wanted Sam to go over there Find Walt. Tell him to call me got into Washington this morn- s a message at the hotel for me. conference ever since."

the phone with an expression of boredom.

you want me to do, Charles?"

get dressed, drive down to the apartments, and wake Walt up?"

"I'll leave right away?"

Charles. Good-by, dear."

to her words, Bill almost believed

RLES got back to Newtown dnesday morning at seven. He to the plant. Sam brought him and change of linen from the Meyers had a thermos of coffee

ame in. Miss Meyers said sternly, ad any sleep since you left here?"

o go by. Where's Walt?"

the assembly line. He should be ute."

t down at his desk, easing his o the chair. "Nice of you to get," he said to Miss Meyers. He fee, and the tiredness slackened

only taken a slugging in Washing- l demanded the impossible, and omised it. The lives of boys like stake, and he'd promised.

le came in, looking worn and Eden had gone to his apartment ay, to find him just coming in, under the weather. However, it m long to sober up, and he'd a relentless pace ever since.

e was saying now: "I know that only takes a little longer. But a breaking point!"

led thinly. "We haven't even I've promised Washington a r cent increase in production!" zy," Walt said flatly. His round belligerently.

s interrupted: "Major Morell

I HAVE recently entered a strange, beautiful, and exotic land. Few men know this land, and, of those, not many have penetrated to its center. That is its most fascinating region, and the part most difficult to find. In that inner portion are the loveliest things ever created. Its inhabitants seldom choose to return to the outer edges, which are grim and forbidding.

It is almost impossible to find anyone who can direct you to this land. You can only stumble upon it by making your way through the fearsome part. When you get there you will find that trees are no longer just trees, but breath-taking creations of jade, silver, and onyx. The people are not just people, but more nearly resemble gods.

When you go to this land you pass through a gate which cannot be opened from the inside. When that gate clicks shut you find yourself in a wilderness peopled with grotesque shapes and filled with unidentifiable sounds. You find that you can communicate with friends, but it will be impossible to leave the land you have entered and return to the one you have left.

If the newcomer is brave and intelligent, he will plunge deeper into this new land, until at last he reaches a region of unparalleled wonder. The

grotesque shapes which frightened him at first are indistinct, but they are all colored with a fairylike rainbow haze of shades remembered from other days. Soon they glow with a new radiance. The haze disperses, and objects become discernible as in a dream, except that they are real and can be touched. Touching seems to make them even more beautiful.

THERE is nothing to spoil the scene—no dirt, no ugliness, no depressing sights. The buildings are all of whitest marble or shining silver. The sky is continually the color you always wished it to be. You are surrounded by exotic flowers, and the grass is always lush and green. It is a land free from imperfection.

The newcomer will meet all his old friends and many new ones in this land. His old friends will have lost any flaws that may have marred their appearance. The ones not neat will have become immaculate, those not handsome will have retained only their best features. Each will have acquired a new appearance that becomes his personality. Only their voices will remain the same as before.

In short, it's a good land to live in. It is the land you see if you look, long enough and hard enough, through a pair of ordinary glass eyes.

★ ★ ★ ★

LIEUT. LLOYD GREENWOOD wasn't always sightless. A year ago last May he was piloting a B-24 on a bombing mission over Austria. It was pretty that day, except for the flak that burst around his plane. Lloyd took some of it through his face, and lost his eyesight and a part of his tongue. His co-pilot had never landed a B-24 under any conditions, still less those that obtained in the blood-spattered bomber that sunny morning. However, Lloyd, who never blanked out, says they landed, and all were able to walk out. Lloyd got the Air Medal as well as the Purple Heart.

Lloyd's wife, Eunice, whom he married before going overseas, has presented him a daughter, Donna, now 1 year old, whom the Lieutenant will never see. Before the war, the 22-year-old pilot had intended following in his father's footsteps as a factory inspector in his home town of McGraw, N. Y., near Rochester. Now he's going to be a writer. The rea-

son: His *In Wonderland* won a contest sponsored by Baynard Kendrick, the mystery writer who created Duncan Maclain, the blind detective, and whose *Melody in Death* appeared in a recent issue of THE AMERICAN.

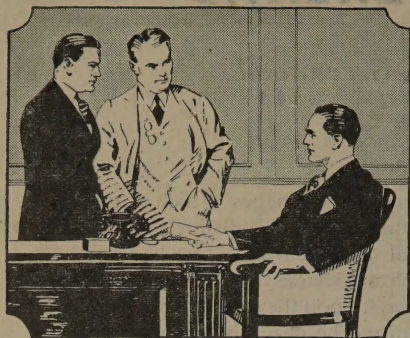
Kendrick works as a \$1-a-year man at Old Farms Convalescent Hospital, Avon, Conn., where he teaches some 700 sightless veterans English, Accounting, and Creative Writing. He has 140 in his writing classes alone, and when Lloyd submitted the accompanying piece Kendrick thought enough of it to bring it to THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

Now Lloyd, encouraged by his first sale, plans to return to college as soon as he is able and take up writing in earnest. His success has also encouraged the other members of Baynard Kendrick's class. It took nearly four months to elicit 11 entries in the first contest. Ten days after *In Wonderland* was accepted, 22 entries were submitted in a second contest.



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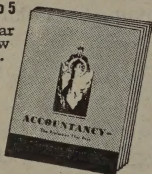
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would like to see you about those press releases."

Charles nodded absently. When Bill came in, he said abruptly, "I suppose you've heard what we're up against?"

"It's all over the plant," Bill said. "The workers feel they're turning out the maximum already. They don't see how it can be stepped up."

"They'll find out quickly enough."

"Might be a good idea for Morell to give them a little pep talk," Walt suggested.

"They're always susceptible to heroes."

"Nothing doing," Bill said flatly. "I'm through with those fool speeches."

"I don't know," Charles said reflectively; "Sample may be right."

So at noon Bill stood by the rail separating the steam tables of the cafeteria from the section filled with crowded tables.

"I just want to give you some facts," he began slowly. "The Government has asked for a twenty-five per cent increase in production of Vindicator planes. They're needed pretty badly."

He hesitated, looking at the mass of faces. They were listening, but not too seriously.

"I'd like to tell you something that happened to me. We didn't have many planes in our part of the South Pacific at first. We used to patch them up—parts of one plane used on another. We sighted a Nip troopship one day. We made a strafing run against it—and got pretty banged up. But after what we did to the troopship and its escort, we didn't give a damn. We reached the field with less than half a wing and a prayer. We had no time for a patch job, either. Because the enemy came over that day and gave us plenty. If there hadn't been four extra Vindicators on hand, we might have lost the field." He added simply, "We flew the ships you fellows made for us."

They listened in sober silence. They had worked hard, they had made sacrifices, but his words sat uneasily on their shoulders.

Then a young fellow up in front said sarcastically, "It's easy f'r you to talk—now that you've got a soft berth."

"I've had a soft berth," Bill said quietly, "which I certainly wasn't entitled to. I didn't like it. And now I'm getting out of it. There must be a place for me where I can be really useful, and I'm going to find it!"

He was so young and earnest, and yet he had the authority that comes only from grueling, heartbreaking experiences. They listened, and they believed him.

THE plant settled down to the emergency. It was geared up for production, and it did the job superbly! Charles saw to it that there were hot, nourishing meals at all hours and great boilers of steaming, fragrant coffee.

Charles, himself, was on duty morning, noon, and a good part of the night. He took no time off. Yet, despite the grueling tension, he seemed in better humor than ever before.

Walt Semple was tireless, too. His hyperthyroid make-up responded like a dynamo to the emergency.

Bill followed in their footsteps. "You need extra workers," he said to Charles; "not so much experienced hands as intelligent people who can be taught a job quickly. I'll find them for you—"

He went to the Y and talked to the director. He made a canvass of employees in nonessential industries. He didn't spare himself. And



The Month's AM  
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Eden Gilroy, Kathleen, his folk all ceased to exist for him.

A fortnight later they began to drop into Charles's office.

"Come in," Charles said, with pity. "Take a look at this Washington. Congratulations a output soars. All we need to do is to maintain this pace."

"We'll do it!" Bill said confidently.

"You bet we will," Charles replied with a friendly eye. "I got a telegram this morning. From Sam. Apparently he's already mentioned the newspaper story in the plant."

Bill sat down wearily.

"You're tired," Charles said. "You knock off early this afternoon."

"Thanks, I believe I will."

WHEN Charles came home he found Eden stretched out on a gray velvet chaise longue in her bedroom. Her eyes were closed, she was breathing like a child without a guilty thought.

She opened her eyes and smiled. A smile came easily to Eden, the smiling smile of all women of her kind.

"Don't scowl at me, Charles."

"I've got a lousy headache."

"Why don't you take a nap before?"

"I'm going to bed and stay there to bring me a pot of tea and some."

"But what'll I do?" she asked disconcerted for to be left alone.

"Go to a movie. Go to bed. Do as you please," he said irritably.

Eden's mind commenced working. "I think I will go to a movie," she decided.

She flew downstairs and gave Charles's light supper changed into a black wool suit and a white, fur-lined coat over her shoulders. She tied a pale blue scarf over her hair and trembled with excitement.

As she backed the roadster into the garage, she glanced up at Charles. The light was still on. But he'd gone to bed, and he'd sleep soundly tonight.

She drove swiftly until she reached the drugstore. In the public booth, she saw Bill. "I'm away from the house, said. "Can you meet me?"

"Of course." His voice quieted, especially anxious to see you."

She drove eagerly through the fifteen miles from Newtown to the small roadhouse called aptly Eden's Hide-Away. She parked her car behind the building and walked in.

The Hide-Away had tall bottles of privacy—and got it.

She slipped into a corner booth. Twice before, she'd met Bill. She'd heard of the enough from her maid, Lina, who'd kept her name away in her mind, never to make use of it.

When she suggested to Bill, "Must have some place we can go about the Hide-Away?" he had



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